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## THE JONAH LEGEND IN INDIA.

STUDENTS of the Old Testament may be interested in learning about a migration of the Jonah Legend eastward into India.

Two versions of it occur in the Tibetan work *bKa-babs bdun-ldan*, a History of Buddhism in India from the eleventh century A. D. to the reign of Akbar, written by the Lama Tāranātha in 1600.<sup>1</sup> This author is well known to students of Buddhism by another work on the history of Buddhism in India compiled in 1608, which has become easily accessible by the Russian translation of W. Wassiljef and a German version of Anton Schiefner. The former book represents the continuation of the latter.

The legends refer to the late period of Buddhism characterized by a group of eighty-four saints or rather sorcerers known under the designation Mahāsiddha. Their activity seems to embrace the time roughly from the eleventh to the thirteenth century. They play an important rôle in the mythology of Lamaism.<sup>2</sup> One version of the legend is connected with the name of Naropa who, in all likelihood, died in A. D. 1035.<sup>3</sup> The story is very brief. Naropa, says our text (p. 37, 7), had consecrated a Man-

<sup>1</sup> The Tibetan text has been edited by the Pandit Sarat Chandra Das at Darjeeling (printed at the Bengal Secretariat Press), 1895, 76 pp. The book has not yet been translated.

<sup>2</sup> A. Grünwedel, *Mythologie des Buddhismus in Tibet und der Mongolei*, p. 40.

<sup>3</sup> This date has been computed by E. Schlagintweit, *Abhandlungen der Bayer. Akademie*, 1896, p. 602.

dala of the God Hevajra<sup>4</sup> and studied certain methods of meditation, and while he once was in a state of contemplation, he was carried away by a stream and swallowed by a fish; but as he perceived in the belly of the fish the Mandala of Heruka,<sup>5</sup> he did not suffer any harm and was cast out again.

The other story (p. 58, 1) is somewhat more detailed. "Mīnapa (i. e., the fisher), a pupil of the Saint Kakkutipa, was a fisherman in Kāmarūpa in the east of India. While he used to meditate a little after the 'wind' method,<sup>6</sup> as practised by the fishermen, he once threw his fishing-hook at a fish, and pulling the line, he was snatched and swallowed by the fish. By virtue of his deeds and meditations, however, he did not die, but drifted on the river Rohita towards Kāmarūpa. There, on the little hill Umagiri, Maheçvara<sup>7</sup> preached to the goddess Umā<sup>8</sup> instructions on the 'wind' Yoga. As the fish came into that river, the fisherman in the belly of the fish listened to the sermon, meditated, and obtained many accomplishments (*guna*). It once happened that this fish was caught by fishermen and killed, when a man turned out. The former king had then already died, and meanwhile, since the birth of his (Mīnapa's) son, thirteen years had elapsed: thus it was found that he had spent twelve years in the belly of the fish. Thereupon, father and son betook themselves to the master Carpatipa, requested a sermon from him, meditated, and obtained both the siddhi. The father is known as the Siddha Mīnapa, the son is called the Siddha Ma-ts'in-dra-

<sup>4</sup> Grünwedel, *loc. cit.*, pp. 104, 105.

<sup>5</sup> Identical with Hevajra. See Schiefner, *Tāranātha*, p. 233.

<sup>6</sup> A term of mysticism denoting the drawing in and holding one's breath to prepare for meditation and finally the power of holding back one's breath for a great length of time, by which faculty miracles and many extraordinary things may be performed, not only those of religious significance, but also of good practical purposes, as in the above case the method of the fishermen is doubtless suggestive of a good catch of fish. See also R. Garbe, *Sāṃkhya und Yoga*, pp. 44 et seq.

<sup>7</sup> Shiva.

<sup>8</sup> Shiva's consort.

pa.” The latter word is apparently identical with the Sanskrit *matsyendra*, “the lord of the fish.”

As traditions of men being swallowed by a fish seem not to be found in ancient India, and as the above two stories relate to a period when Mohammedan power was established, we shall probably not err in supposing that it may have been the Arabs who spread the story in India. Indeed, the legend of Jonah is narrated in the Koran (Sūrah, XXXVII, 139-148) and quoted in four other passages of it.<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>9</sup> See Hughes, *Dictionary of Islam*, p. 249.